

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	Czechoslovakia	REPORT	
SUBJECT	1. Easier Conditions for men Travelling Abroad. 2. New Driving Licenses and OPs.	DATE DISTR.	13 July 1955
DATE OF INFO.		NO. OF PAGES	25X1
PLACE ACQUIRED		REQUIREMENT NO.	RD
DATE ACQUIRED		REFERENCES	

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1. Until the end of 1953 only Party members fully trusted by the Prague Communist regime were allowed to travel abroad as business representatives. Yet, even these trusted Communists had to go through a lengthy and complicated procedure before they were issued their passports and allowed to leave the country.

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2. A marked change in this situation, apparently brought about by the regime's realization that political reliability cannot replace expert proficiency, became noticeable at the beginning of 1954. At that time at least some of the inexperienced Communist trade representatives were replaced by qualified businessmen of the pre-Communist era.

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never given a political or security briefing when going abroad and was never debriefed on return home.

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young man, going abroad for the first time, received some such briefing (details unknown).

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3. At present there are two types of businessmen travelling abroad from Czechoslovakia:

- a. Long-term representatives. These are delegates of those state export-import agencies who, in the given foreign country, are engaged in large-scale business transactions. These business representatives are attached to the office of the Czech Commercial Attache. They receive copies of all the mail between their firm

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and its customers whom they then visit to inquire about the quality of Czech goods, times of delivery, prospects of future business, etc. They also help with the settling of any complaints and difficulties which occur between their firm and the customers. These resident representatives usually stay abroad for three years and are allowed to bring their families with them. From time to time, usually three times a year (or more often if necessary), they travel back to Czechoslovakia to report to the firm's head office on their business activities and to receive further instructions.

- b. Short-term representatives. These are experienced officials of the various state export-import agencies who, when the need arises, are sent abroad to discuss business deals with customers and to establish new business contacts. Usually the firm now sends the head of that one of its departments whose merchandise is chiefly marketed in the foreign country in question (each department deals with a certain type or closely related types of products). At the same time the representative of the firm is also almost invariably charged with transacting business for other departments whose merchandise is marketed in the country he is travelling to.

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After repeated complaints of several of these business representatives to their head offices, who in turn complained against the strictness of the customs officials to the Ministry of Foreign Trade and to the political authorities, the customs officers apparently were instructed to be lenient with business representatives returning from abroad.

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5. As compared to the long-term (or resident) business representatives, the short-term representatives are never allowed to take their families with them on their trips abroad.

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Driving licenses were being exchanged for new ones

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everybody applying for a new driving license, whether he had held one before or not, was required to undergo a test in driving proficiency.

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